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Application Serial No. 09/994,810
Attorney Docket No. 01-050

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

The following is a complete listing of all claims ever presented in the present application, including the text of all pending claims and withdrawn claims.

1. (ORIGINAL) A method for dispensing a substitute product, comprising:
receiving a selection of a first product from a purchaser; and
if the first product is not available,
retrieving a substitute product identifier corresponding to a substitute product; and
offering the substitute product to the purchaser.
2. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving an amount of money from a purchaser.
3. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 2, further comprising:
detecting the purchaser;
measuring a time between a detection and a receipt of the amount of money from the purchaser; and
storing a value corresponding to the time.

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4. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 3, wherein the detecting step is performed by at least one of:
- a motion detector, an infrared detector, an acoustic signal detector, and a pressure detector.
5. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 2, further comprising:
- measuring a time between a receipt of the amount of money and a receipt of the selection; and
- storing a value corresponding to the time.
6. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
- determining an availability of the first product.
7. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
- recording a value corresponding to the selection of the first product.
8. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 7, wherein the value includes one of: a first product identifier corresponding to the first product, a time the first product was selected, a date the first product was selected and an availability of the first product.

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9. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
storing, for the first product, a substitute product identifier corresponding to a substitute product.
10. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 9, wherein the step of storing a substitute product identifier further comprises:
measuring a second product demand corresponding to a number of times the second product is selected when the first product is unavailable; and
if the second product demand meets a predefined criterion,
storing a second product identifier corresponding to the second product as the substitute product identifier.
11. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 10, further comprising:
measuring a third product demand corresponding to a number of times a third product is selected when the first product is unavailable.
12. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 11, wherein the predefined criterion comprises a requirement that the second product demand is higher than the third product demand.

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13. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 9, further comprising:
- storing a first expiration date corresponding to the second product;
 - and
 - storing a second expiration date corresponding to a third product,
 - determining whether the first expiration date is earlier than the second expiration date, and if the first expiration date is earlier:
 - storing a second product identifier corresponding to the second product as the substitute product identifier.
14. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 9, wherein the substitute product identifier corresponds to a predetermined product.
15. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 9, further comprising:
- measuring a demand for each of a plurality of products stored in the dispensing device.
16. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 15, wherein the offering step further comprises:
- determining a second product demand for the second product, and

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if the second product demand is higher than the demand for each of the plurality of products:

storing a second product identifier corresponding to a ~~the~~ second product as the substitute product identifier.

17. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein the offering step further comprises:

offering the substitute product to the consumer at a discounted price.

18. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

detecting the purchaser;

measuring a time between a detection of the purchaser and a receipt of the selection from the purchaser; and

storing a value corresponding to the time.

19. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 18, wherein the detecting step is performed by at least one of:

a motion detector, an infrared detector, an acoustic signal detector, and a pressure detector.

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20. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
measuring an average selection time.
21. The method of claim 20, further comprising:
measuring a demand for each of a plurality of products stored in the
dispensing device.
22. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 21, further comprising:
determining which of the plurality of products has a highest demand.
23. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 22, further comprising:
detecting the purchaser;
measuring a time that passes after detecting the purchaser; and
if, prior to the receiving step, the time is greater than the average selection
time,
offering the first product to the purchaser.
24. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 23, wherein the detecting step is
performed by at least one of:

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a motion detector, an infrared detector, an acoustic signal detector, and a pressure detector.

25. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 23, wherein the step of offering the first product to the purchaser further comprises:

offering the first product to the purchaser at a discounted price.

26. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 23, wherein the first product has the highest demand.

27. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 23, wherein the first product has the lowest demand.

28. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 23, further comprising:

comparing at least a first product expiration date corresponding to the first product and a second product expiration date corresponding to a second product.

29. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 28, wherein the step of offering the first product to the purchaser further comprises:

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offering the first product to the purchaser if the first product
expiration date is earlier than the second product expiration date.

30. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein the first product is a service.
31. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein the substitute product is a service.
32. (ORIGINAL) A method for dispensing a substitute product, comprising:
measuring a demand for each of a plurality of products;
determining from the demand a substitute product for a first product; and
storing, for the first product, a substitute product identifier corresponding to
the substitute product.
33. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 32, further comprising:
receiving a selection of the first product;
determining an availability of the first product; and
offering the substitute product if the first product is unavailable.

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34. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 33, wherein the step of offering the substitute product further comprises:

offering the substitute product at a discounted price.

35. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 32, further comprising:

detecting a purchaser;

measuring a time between a detection of the purchaser and a receipt of an amount of money from the purchaser; and

storing a value corresponding to the measured time.

36. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 35, wherein the detecting step is performed by at least one of:

a motion detector, an infrared detector, an acoustic signal detector, and a pressure detector.

37. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 32, further comprising:

detecting a purchaser;

measuring a time between a detection of the purchaser and a receipt of a selection from the purchaser; and

storing a value corresponding to the measured time.

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38. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 37, wherein the detecting step is performed by at least one of:
- a motion detector, an infrared detector, an acoustic signal detector, and a pressure detector.
39. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 32, further comprising:
- determining an average selection time.
40. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 39, further comprising:
- determining which of the plurality of products has a highest demand.
41. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 40, further comprising:
- detecting a purchaser;
- measuring a time that passes after a detection of the purchaser; and
- if, prior to the step of receiving a selection, the time is greater than the average selection time,
- offering the first product to the purchaser.

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42. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 41, wherein the detecting step is performed by at least one of:

a motion detector, an infrared detector, an acoustic signal detector, and a pressure detector.

43. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 41, wherein the first product has the highest demand.

44. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 41, further comprising:

retrieving at least a first product expiration date corresponding to the first product and a second product expiration date corresponding to the second product.

45. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 44, wherein the offering step further comprises:

determining whether the first product expiration date is earlier than the second product expiration date, and if the first product expiration date is earlier, offering the first product to the purchaser.

46. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 39, further comprising:

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determining which of the plurality of products has the lowest demand.

47. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 46, further comprising:
- detecting a purchaser;
 - measuring a time that passes after a detection of the purchaser; and
 - if, prior to the step of receiving a selection, the time is greater than the average selection time,
- offering the first product to the purchaser.

48. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 47, wherein the detecting step is performed by at least one of:
- a motion detector, an infrared detector, an acoustic signal detector, and a pressure detector.

49. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 46, wherein the first product has the lowest demand.

50. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 49, wherein the offering step further comprises:

offering the first product to the purchaser at a discounted price.

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51. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 32, wherein the first product is a service.
52. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 32, wherein the substitute product is a service.
53. (ORIGINAL) A method for dispensing a substitute product, comprising:
determining an average selection time;
detecting a purchaser;
measuring a time from a detection of the purchaser; and
if the time is greater than the average selection time;
offering a first product to the purchaser.
54. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 53, wherein the detecting step is performed by at least one of:
a motion detector, an infrared detector, an acoustic signal detector,
and a pressure detector.
55. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 53, further comprising:
measuring a first product demand corresponding to the first product; and

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measuring a demand for each of a plurality of remaining products; and
comparing the first product demand to the demand for each of the plurality
of remaining products.

56. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 55, wherein the offering step further
comprises:

offering the first product to the purchaser if the first product demand is
greater than the demand for each of the plurality of remaining products.

57. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 55, wherein the offering step further
comprises:

offering the first product to the purchaser if the first product demand is
lower than the demand for each of the plurality of remaining products.

58. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 53, further comprising:

storing a first product expiration date corresponding to the first product; and
storing at least one expiration date corresponding to each of a plurality of
remaining products.

59. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 58, further comprising:

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offering the first product to the purchaser if the first product expiration date is earlier than the at least one expiration date.

60. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 53, wherein the first product is a predetermined product.

61. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 53, wherein the first product is a service.

62. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method ~~for measuring a demand of an unavailable product offered by a dispensing device~~, comprising:

receiving a selection of a product;

determining an availability of the product; and

if the product is unavailable:

storing an indication that the selected product is unavailable.

63. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 62, wherein the product is a service.

64 - 75 (CANCELED)

76. (ORIGINAL) An apparatus comprising:

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a vending machine;

a device in communication with the vending machine,

in which the apparatus is operable to

receive a selection of a first product from a purchaser;

retrieve a substitute product identifier corresponding to a substitute
product; and

offer the substitute product to the purchaser.

77. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 76, in which the device is operable to:
receive payment from a purchaser.

78. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 77, in which the device is operable to:
instruct the vending machine that payment has been received.

79. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 76, in which the device is operable to:
receive data via a network.

80. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 80, in which the device is operable to:
display to a purchaser data received via the network.

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81. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 76, in which the device is operable to:
receive input from a purchaser.

82. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 81, in which the device is operable to:
receive input from a purchaser via a touch screen.

83. (CANCELED)